

**Unusual numbers of the wasp nest beetle,
Metoecus paradoxus (L.) Coleoptera, Rhipiphoridae**
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As the result of an enquiry to the museum on 10th September, 1996, Mr Kennedy of Carmunnock (NGR: 26/600571) brought in 23 specimens, 11 males and 12 females, of the beetle *Metoecus paradoxus* (L.). The beetle larva is a parasitoid of social wasps, initially feeding on the live grubs until finally devouring them and pupating within the cells of the nest. The host species in this case, *Paravespula vulgaris* (L.), was the normal one but the numbers from one nest are unusual. They had accumulated in a light fitting set into the ceiling of a room above which the nest was located. Mr Kennedy believed that it was likely that more of the beetles had been disposed of along with large numbers of wasps before it was realised that they might be of some interest.

The highest number known previously from a British nest, according to Spradbery (1973) is 24, which were from a nest in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire on 27 September, 1905 (Crawshay, 1905). Apart from those given by Crowson (1981), the only other local (unpublished) occurrence that I am aware of is from the Stanley area of Paisley found on 28 August, 1992, a specimen of which is in Paisley Museum. Although the beetle is rarely seen, other data indicate that it is widespread in southern Scotland.

References

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Crowson, R.A. (1981). The wasp parasite beetle in Scotland. *Glasgow Naturalist* 20, 181.
Spradbery, J.P. (1973). *Wasps, an account of the biology and natural history of solitary and social wasps with particular reference to those of the British Isles*. Sidwick & Jackson, London.

**Vagrant Emperor Dragonfly (*Hemianax ephippiger*
(Burmeister)) at Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire**

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A male of this species was caught at Caerlaverock Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Reserve (NY059661), Dumfriesshire (VC 72), on 3rd November, 1996. David Patterson, staff member at the reserve, saw the insect as it flew into bushes late in the afternoon, presumably to roost for the night, and was able to catch it by hand. Recognising the dragonfly as something exotic, he brought it to Tullie House Museum in Carlisle for identification. By using Askey (1988) it proved to be *Hemianax ephippiger* (Burmeister), a species which originates in Africa and the Middle East through to Pakistan. It is a noted migrant and is regularly recorded around the Mediterranean region and breeds sporadically in southern Europe. *H. ephippiger* has been reported from Britain on fewer than 20 other occasions and we believe this to be the first time it has been seen on the Scottish mainland, the only other Scottish record being from Shetland in 1970 (Silsby, 1993). There is some suggestion that this species may have become a more frequent visitor to the British Isles in recent years, another individual having been reported from the Isle of Man in 1995 (Merritt *et al.*, 1996). The Caer-

laverock dragonfly was found after a period of strong southerly winds and its epic journey may well have been wind assisted.

References

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Odonata at Glen Moss, Kilmacolm

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Glen Moss (NS 368700 sh.63) is one of the few remaining extensive, undisturbed marshlands in Renfrewshire (VC 76). The site is situated in a hollow in the hills about a half mile due east from the centre of Kilmacolm in Inverclyde District. Glen Moss was notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1973 because of the many uncommon plants, birds and insects which thrive in this wetland area. The site is described as a mixed basin and valley mire with peat land and an area of shallow open water surrounded by sedge-dominated plant communities. Glen Moss covers an area of 20 hectares and the southern part consists of regenerating sphagnum bog with numerous bog pools in which dragonflies and other aquatic insects thrive. In 1991 the Scottish Wildlife Trust negotiated with one of the five landowners, the right to treat a large part of the site as a Nature Reserve. Two of the remaining landowners have since signed Agreement Plans and the whole of the southern area of the site is now included in the Nature Reserve.

Aerial photographs taken in 1989, when compared to earlier aerial photographs, show that the site is drying out. There has been considerable encroachment of birch and pine on the peatland areas and the open water has been reduced by an increase in the sedge-beds and rafts of begbean. The recently produced Management Plan for the reserve proposes fixed point photography over a number of years to monitor these changes. Glen Moss is slowly reverting to the drier habitat shown on the first edition OS maps published in the 1850's before the introduction of a sluice by Kilmacolm Curling Club in the 1890's for outdoor curling and skating activities. This habitat change would considerably reduce the biodiversity contained within the site. The Management Plan for the site proposes to increase the water table by reinstating the abandoned sluice.

Annual field observations have been made by the author since 1982. All the listed species have been present each year in varying numbers dependent on the prevailing summer weather conditions. The larva of most of the species listed have been found and identified and all the species have been observed pairing or egg laying over the years. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Odonata populations at Glen Moss are presently stable and viable colonies. The construction of suitable new bog pools, as proposed in the reserve Management Plan, should result in increasing their distribution throughout the entire site.

Eight species of Odonata breed at Glen Moss making the area a Key Site for Dragonflies in Renfrewshire. (See the Ref-